Common Prayers

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(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

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THE CALL OF THE NEW AGE

(*By Dhirendra Mazumdar*)

Britishers left India. The country attained political freedom. But the Swaraj of the masses has not come. The mere exit of the foreign power and the establishment of Home-Rule does not bring Swaraj. As long as real democracy is not established one cannot say that the Swaraj has come. In the present-day world either an individual or a party rules the various countries. Therefore, to bring real Swaraj we will have to democratize the whole social fabric i.e. the actual and direct transfer of all power and administration to the masses. And this is possible only through the democratization of the economic life of the society.

Economic life involves production from land and industries. The concentration of land and industries in the hands of a few individuals or groups has given birth to totalitarianism. The picture of democracy envisaged by Gandhiji can be brought about only by demolishing this concentration of land and industry and distributing them in every village and to every home.

Gandhiji has shown the way of socializing industry through *charkha* and village industries (*gramodyog*). Hence, in order to achieve this goal, we are endeavouring to boycott large-scale centralized industries and emphasizing the creation of self-reliant economy through village industries. Gandhiji in his lifetime could not give any definite plan for the democratization of land. He died before doing so. Fortunately, Vinoba, his chief disciple, has undertaken his task. He has, through his Land-Gift-Mission, shown a definite way to bring about decentralization or socialization of land.

In fact, the land problem is universal. The attention of the whole world is focussed on its satisfactory solution. But in resolving it, people, by adopting violent means, are inviting more violence in its wake. In such an atmosphere, if Vinoba succeeds in his non-violent revolution, it would mean a definite way to achieve world peace.

On India today rests the responsibility of giving a definite lead to the present-day world. Therefore it is the duty of every son of the country to take this message to every home and hamlet.

Sevagram, 19-12-'51

(Translated from Hindi)

ADVANCEMENT OF LABOURERS

On Sunday, the 18th November 1951, Shri Vinoba addressed at Delhi a large gathering composed mainly of mill-workers and lower-middle classes.

To begin with, he expressed his pleasure at being with a predominantly working class audience. He had performed many tasks, which an ordinary worker did, and had thought over the question of improving their lot. To study their living conditions and finding a practical solution of their problems, it was necessary to live and work as workers did. "I have come to you walking as a worker ordinarily does. Just as workers have to be punctual if they are to reach the mill gates in time I too have reached here at the appointed hour. I do not want to make a speech to you but talk to you as one of you.

"The conditions of workers in India are deplorable. The grievances of workers in cities are quite often publicized and known, but there is nobody to hear about the lot of their brethren in the villages. Their voice does not reach outside. There are many who work as casual labourers and their plight is the hardest of all. They go from place to place in search of employment. Sometimes they succeed in finding a job, but on other occasions they are unsuccessful. Their sufferings can well be imagined. In India today there is an army of sufferers and it is not a healthy sign in the life of a nation.

"Why are they suffering? Because for centuries there has been a tendency among people to look down upon manual labour. There was a division of work. Some people took to intellectual pursuit. Others attended to administrative matters. There were some who took to trade and commerce and then came the vast numbers who were engaged in manual work. Those who rendered the least amount of manual labour were assigned the highest social status. Next to them in social hierarchy were administrators. Businessmen occupied the third place, the agriculturists the fourth and those who did scavenging work had the last. Thus those who were most useful to society had the lowest status.

"The position today is that one who does the least work not merely enjoys the highest social status but claims the heaviest monetary reward. There was a time when it was not so; Brahmins then did not claim wealth but were only intent to win respect for themselves in the hearts of the people. Now they wanted wealth as well as honour.

"Those who are styled as lower classes have to work because they have no other alternative. If they do not work they have to starve. An agriculturist works in the field, a *bhangi* cleans a latrine or removes garbage from the streets and a *chamar* makes shoes, not out of any feelings of respect for his calling but out of sheer compulsion. There is an ever-present feeling in his mind that it would be a blessing if he got rid of his job.

Dignity of Labour

"A mentality has taken firm root in the minds of people that those who do manual work are inferior beings. Labour has lost its dignity as well as its worth. It was under these conditions that foreigners conquered our country. They came as traders and eventually established their hold. They could win the co-operation of the so-called lower classes and establish their *raj*. There was no organized opposition against them."

Vinobaji then explained how the prevalence of untouchability had damaged the present social structure in India. People who performed tasks of vital importance to society were regarded as untouchables. In spite of the efforts made by Gandhiji to abolish it and the practical measures that he adopted for its eradication, the evil had not been fully rooted out.

"Such a state of affairs has to be ended and all those who produce should be regarded as the true citizens of India. They should be honoured by society and should receive decent living wages. Their life should be made so happy that others may feel envious of their lot.

"The Land-Gifts Mission which I have undertaken is directed towards this end. I am trying to secure land for the landless and am asking for it as a right. I am not begging for it. All I am telling those who possess land is this: How can our country prosper if people who can till the land do not have it and those who do not or cannot cultivate it themselves possess it?

"God has created land and men cannot become its owners. They can only be servants. Instead of realizing this, we claim to be its masters. It is an unsustainable claim. Therefore, recognize the right of the landless to your land. Just as you give a share of your property to your son, treat *daridranarayana* as the unborn son and give him his due share. Do not give with an idea that you are obliging others. Only think that you are righting an obvious wrong. Regard me as your well-wisher and lighten the heavy load that you are carrying.

True Diagnosis

"When a person becomes too fat the doctor tells him his health is endangered and if he wants to get well he should shed some of his surplus weight. He asks him to reduce his diet, give up eating fatty substances, like ghee, milk or sweets. When the doctor tells him this he is not his enemy but a true well-wisher."

A large number of people had favourably reacted to his diagnosis and had started donating land because they had realized that in that lay their well-being. If in spite of accepting his diagnosis there were patients who did not want his treatment, it did not matter. Those who did not donate land today would do so tomorrow. If the seed was once well sown it would sprout one day, today or tomorrow.

"If my ideas reach the people and they accept them, I do not much worry whether they donate land now or hereafter. What I am doing today creates the right atmosphere and if I am successful in this venture it will not only be beneficial to the landless but to all the poor and down-trodden people of India. Their prestige and respect will be enhanced and their rights will receive their due recognition.

"People may say: You are doing something which may benefit those of us who live in the villages but what are you doing for the workers in the cities?

"My answer to this is: My life is dedicated to workers, whether in the villages or in the cities. I am greatly anxious about their well-being. The work I have undertaken is of a fundamental nature. If we succeed in it, it is bound to solve many complicated issues (*ek sadhe sab sadhe*)!

"The success of my mission will help in raising the dignity of labour. It will also result in the payment of an equitable wage for all work.

Labour-Capital Relations

"Those who are engaged in labour welfare work generally talk of wage increase and payment of bonus. It is all right so far as it goes. But it will be better if a new relationship altogether is established between mill-owners and workers. Mill-owners should come to regard their employees as co-partners in their undertaking. An employer and his employees should work together in a co-operative venture as partners. He should come to regard his wealth as a sacred trust for the well-being of society. Whatever profits are earned in a year, a portion of it should be earmarked for the expansion and development of the undertaking, another portion should be distributed among workers and a third and smaller portion should go to the employer, not by way of return for his investment but by way of remuneration for services rendered by him — for the ability and skill he has displayed in managing the affairs of the undertaking.

"Whatever wealth he has belongs to the nation and he is a servant of the people. His share should be decided by mutual agreement. If industrial relations are re-organized on these lines, all labour-capital conflicts will disappear and not merely workers but the country as a whole will prosper.

"The present is an age of rationalism and if we can make people understand our ideas there will be many among them who will be convinced and mould their future on those lines. Even if one single individual is convinced the country as a whole is bound to feel its effect. There will be others to follow him in due course.

Best Test

"The best test of the finer feelings of an individual is this: Try to find out how an employer who is styled as hard-hearted behaves towards his children, parents and other family members. Does he love them and treat them considerately? If he does, it is clear he has those tender feelings. The only possible explanation for his behaviour towards his employees then is that he has a single-track mind and has come to think that the only way to keep down the prices of articles he manufactures and thereby succeed in his business is to pay low wages and that if wages are raised the prices of his goods will go up and nobody will buy them. Somehow, he has come to feel that howsoever high wages they may be paid the workers will not work hard.

"In the ultimate analysis he regards money as the only protection against adversity. We have to convince him that there is a much more vital force which moulds people's lives, namely, love and that if he can win the love of his people he will provide for himself the best protection against all misfortunes.

"Labour on its part should also become more enlightened. Now-a-days talks of *hartals* and presentation of a charter of demands are considered as hallmarks of enlightenment among the working classes. But the kind of enlightenment I want is education on the right lines. By that I do not mean attainment of mere academic learning but technical and vocational skill as well. Technological institutions should be started. Only when people become experts will they be respected and their advice taken by their employers.

Drinking

"There is also need of raising the moral standards of workers. It is sometimes said prohibition cannot be successful in a particular area because it is *mazdoor basti* (labour area). After returning from their fields people in villages sing *bhajans* and *Harinam* to relax themselves. In the cities liquor is considered as a substitute. It has taken the place of *Harinam* and *bhajan* and has become *Tulsi Ramayana* for the people. A friend once wrote to me: 'How can you, who have not tasted it, know and understand what relief and satisfaction liquor gives to tired nerves!' To that my answer was: Who does not know that once liquor enters into a working-class household it spells its eternal ruin? Wherever prohibition has been introduced the condition of workers has improved. Ask the womenfolk or workers of Ahmedabad and Madras.

How grateful they are to prohibition! Their lives are happier. It may be said: Who asks workers to drink? If they don't want let them not take it. Where is the need for prohibition? Liquor is like lust and once you make it easily available people fall a prey to it. In Delhi the consumption of liquor is growing and it is a danger signal.

"Once our workers become hard-working, experts in their own line and men with high moral standards, the whole atmosphere will be vitalized and then whatever they tell their employers is bound to produce effect.

"A change of heart is all that is needed. Once that is done all distinctions based upon wealth, education, caste or work will disappear and the rich and the poor will become one."

(From the *Hindustan Times*, 20-11-'51)

INDIAN AND PAKISTAN YOUTH

(*By G. Ramachandran*)

In October last I spent some days with a group of young people from many countries at the International Seminar in Jhargram. Three of the participants were young Muslim students from Dacca. They were bright, keen-minded and full of ideas. We became good friends. We discussed freely many things about India and Pakistan. One of them was critical of Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan, as so many of us in India are critical about Prime Minister Nehru. We agreed however without reservation that it was a very good thing that India had Nehru as Prime Minister and Pakistan had Liaqat Ali as Prime Minister. We agreed that both were modern-minded and progressive statesmen who, with great ability, kept the fanatics and extremists in their respective countries in their proper places. We parted very good friends. Then came the news of the sad and tragic assassination of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. I first got the news in the train from Jhargram to Wardha on my return journey. From Wardha I wrote to my three young friends in Dacca expressing my deep sympathy at the death of their great Prime Minister. Here are some extracts from the replies I have received from them. They will show that if only the youth in India and Pakistan have their way, the two countries will become good and close friends. Perhaps the kingdom of youth can cut across the boundaries of national States.

1. "I deeply appreciate your sorrow at the tragic murder of Liaqat. You are the symbol of that Bharat which wants to make the relationship between our two countries sincere and closer. You and I should be the people who would make the two States a happy abode for the two nations living so close to each other. I am very much interested in Gandhian economics. Will you be kind enough to send me some literature? Please, at least, send me the famous Sarvodaya Plan."

2. "Your sincere condolences on the sad demise of our Prime Minister has consoled me personally as well as my friends. Your, mine and many others' desire to have India and Pakistan composed of tolerant citizens is sure to succeed some day or other. The days of fanatics and extremists are numbered. It is hard to tolerate the whims and fancies of fanatics which cause grievous losses, like the loss of Liaqat to Pakistan and Mahatmaji to India. Such loss is not only for India and Pakistan but for the whole world. The world has lost in three brief years a great humanitarian and a keen-minded statesman due to fanatics. You can well imagine the nature of the grief that the people here had to bear. They were simply overwhelmed. I believe the greater part of India too was shocked and sad, notwithstanding political differences."

3. "I felt a thrill of joy in receiving your letter of sympathy which really bridged our hearts and countries. I felt much this nearness, not because of your sympathy only, but as something deeper. I read in the *Statesman* that Vinobaji arrived in New Delhi to discuss future planning with the Planning Commission on behalf of the unfortunate millions. I hope his mission will be crowned with success. I also read the news of Kumarappaji's visit to New China. Please convey my deep love to your co-workers."

NIGHT-SOIL MANURE

(*By Radhakrishna*)

In the Five Year Plan, a very big item has been left out. It is the utilization of human night-soil. This is the raw material which cannot be ignored so easily. At an average of 4 oz. per capita per day it comes to about 10 thousand tons per day, or 36,50,000 tons per annum.

The same might be said of human urine. How many factories like Sindri Factory will be required to produce such a big quantity of fertilizer? What State resources and a capital etc. would be needed to produce this necessary item for food production? If produced by centralized system, how much transport and distribution services will be needed to distribute it?

Just as Maharshi Dayanand went to Rajasthan in his last days for the reform of the princes, Gandhiji went to Bhangi colonies to reform the Bhangis, whom he wanted to entrust with this important item of social and economic welfare of the State.

A brief outline will not be out of place here:

Every Bhangi colony should have a Sanitary Inspector duly trained to instruct them how to handle the material usefully. These training schools should be given more importance than the police and military training schools. The training should make them better Bhangis and not middle-class gentlemen, who are actually a burden on the economics of our country.

Every village must have a few movable latrines made by the local carpenters. Village Panchayat should undertake the job of teaching the villagers the habit of using them and utilizing the material usefully.

Mhow Cantt.

HARIJAN

Jan. 19 1952

COMMON PRAYERS

Shri N. Vyasa Tirtha of Hyderabad Deccan, writes:

"In the explanation of the Secular State, Vinobaji seems to have set aside as a stupid one very pertinent question which interests teachers like me. 'Is singing of Vedic verses in an educational (not denominational) institution allowed in a Secular State?' I am afraid this question is not so stupid as Vinobaji thinks. Here we are not to think that the Vedic verses are to be repeated on a day when, say, a Hindu festival is celebrated in the school. It is a case of the verses being recited daily, say, during the prayer at the beginning of the school. I should think that it is certainly objectionable to do so.

"It is one thing to view this from *sarva-dharma-sama-bhava* attitude. But it is quite different, viewed from the complications that this involves in a cosmopolitan school like the one that I am serving in. Let alone wounding of the sentiments of Muslims or Christian students by this act, this in turn gives a wide scope for creating havoc to religious fanatics. A few of the Christian schools are examples of this. In the general assembly of the school, not merely psalms are sung of Christian sentiments, afterwards a short sermon is also added to it. I need not add here other possibilities of misusing the prayer halls by religious fanatics in Educational Institutions. In fact in the last Educational Conference held at Bombay, a few Christian teachers did bring in a resolution of that nature. Of course, I did oppose it. I even requested Shri Maganbhai Desai of Gujarat Vidyapith who was present there to support my opposition. But like Vinobaji he chose to differ from my views.

"I am putting to you the same question because, though I respect Pujya Vinobaji and Maganbhai very much, in this particular thing I stand unconvinced of their views. I feel they are just underestimating the possibilities of havoc being caused by such freedom, specially in these days of infancy in secular thought in our country. Hence I request you to give a calm consideration to all the aspects of this important question, viz. 'Can Vedic verse or an extract from Quran or Bible be sung during the school prayer?' Do not set it aside as a stupid question. I am a personal witness to the possibilities of its misuse. I request you to view this strictly from an educational point of view."

I have always been of opinion that all prayers should be in the spoken langauge of the people. The reciter or reciters should be able to follow the meaning of the texts recited. Vedic or Sanskrit or Arabic sounds have no spiritual quality in them as such. But it has become a superstition with almost every denominational religion, that prayers should be recited in the original language of the scripture accepted by it as authoritative; and a text from the scripture of another religion, though conveying no idea to which he can have any objection, cannot be a prayer to which he can subscribe. The essential thing to be seen is whether the text of the recitation contains any idea, not acceptable to the followers of other religions. The tagging of religion to a particular language and an unusual sing-song manner of reciting it, is a die-hard superstition, and has to be removed. Naturally the school and other public prayers should be the first place to start this reform.

How, is it to be done? For a long time Gandhiji held fast to the idea that for Hindus Sanskrit, for Muslims Arabic, for Parsis the language of the Avasthas, and so on were sacred, and insisted on prayers being recited in those original languages. As his views about *sarva-dharma-sama-bhava* began to intensify, he introduced one after another texts from scriptures of several religions in their original languages in the Ashram prayer. Necessarily, very few understood even the Sanskrit verses, and the Quranic and other texts were no more than sounds in a particular rhythm.

The great thing, therefore, to be done is to remove the superstition that a religion must accept also a particular language for praying to God. One way is to select universally acceptable noble thoughts and prayers from every scripture, put them into the regional language, and adopt that as the text of the prayer.

Vinobaji brought about this by degrees. He had already rendered *Gita* into Marathi, he also rendered *Al Fatiha* of Quran into Marathi; later on, *Ishopanishad* and the *Gayatri*, and the Parsi prayer also. He also introduced Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist texts, and the Hindi version of Christ's prayer, and thus made his text of prayers representative of all the great denominational religions. The Paunar Ashram and the Hindustani Talimi Sangh at Sevagram have been using this text for some time and it was broadcast by the Nagpur Radio on the last Gandhi Birth-day. The Buddhist, Jain and Sikh texts are still in their languages of origin. These may also be rendered in the regional language or Hindi. If the language of the prayer is not regional but a spoken language of another province or Hindi, and simple enough for reciters to follow, such text need not be translated.

If my views are accepted there need be no quarrel about the prayer — except, perhaps, for those who are fanatical adherents of either of the theory of no-religious education or of that of a single denominational religion. The prayer would be neither in Sanskrit, nor Arabic, Avestha, Pali, Prakrit etc. The prayer would be equally of Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Parsi and every other religion, and also of none of them. The text of any religion, if unobjectionable, would have place in it in a spoken and easily understood language of the country.

In suggesting this, I simply extend the principle accepted by the Christians, I believe, all over Europe. The Bible is nowhere read, except by scholars, in the original languages in which its various parts have been written. Prayers are conducted and psalms and ballads are sung in the spoken language of the people. Nor do the people

of India know the stories of *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat*, and the *Purans* through Sanskrit. They are all rendered in the various languages of the people. I know several Hindu sects, which do not pray through Sanskrit and for their ignorance of Sanskrit are not less acquainted with the essential principles and philosophy of Hindu religion than any Sanskrit *pandit*.

The writer refers to the misuse which might be made by proselytizers and communists. This must be guarded against by other methods. The Constitution of India has laid down a few principles regarding religions. This is one safeguard. The very fact that the prayer contains translations from texts of every religion will be another moderating influence. Public opinion will be a third one. Suitable text books, giving ennobling stories and literature from various religions would be a fourth and so on. While all safe-guards may be adopted against intoleration and proselytization, moral and religious education must not be neglected in schools.

Bombay, 1-1-'52 K. G. MASHRUWALA

THAKKAR BAPA'S ANNIVERSARY

This issue will be published on the first anniversary day of Thakkar Bapa. No literate Indian, or even illiterate Harijan or Adimjana can be ignorant of his invaluable services. His was a pure humanitarian service, free of all party politics. His life was based on the motto : Service of the forsaken and the down-trodden.

People had lovingly and gratefully appreciated his service to the country while he was still alive. Affectionate and appreciative tributes were paid to his memory upon his death. Having witnessed the great respect in which he was held by the public, some of his colleagues were emboldened to raise a memorial fund to him for the maintenance of his two dear institutions — the Harijan Sevak Sangh and the Adimjati Sevak Sangh. Instead of fixing a monetary target for the fund, they resolved that donations should be collected from at least 10 lakh contributors. A minimum of four annas was fixed as the smallest contribution. It does not appear that 10 lakh people have yet responded to the appeal.

The works started by Thakkar Bapa have still to be completed. They will remain so as long as Harijans and Adimjatis do not become so merged in the social fabric as to be indistinguishable from the rest of the people. They must get equality not only in the eye of law, but in the actual life of the society. Then it might be said that the Harijan and Adimjati Sevak Sanghs have, as such, no mission of service left. But in a different sense, this type of service will always remain in the world. One can hardly conceive of a period when there is none, who is not in distress, and does not need the help and services of his fellow beings. Humanity will always remain in need of kindness, compassion and service. The memorial to Thakkar Bapa is really man's homage to these noble virtues.

Bombay, 6-1-'52 K. G. MASHRUWALA

SARVODAYA YATRAS

(*By Dhirendra Mazumdar*)

In connection with my article which appeared in the *Harijan* dated the 15th December 1951 under the caption *Sarvodaya Yatras*, a correspondent from Aravatgi, Dist. Dharwar has put certain questions for clarification. I am releasing the text of my reply for the readers of the *Harijan* to keep them informed of the same.

Q. 1. Whether it is advisable to go in groups of 30 or 40 or in batches of 4 and 5 ? I feel we should go in 30 or 40's.

A. I feel it is not advisable to go in groups of 30 or 40. This will be too much for the village reception committee. This will also destroy the sanctity of the programme.

Q. 2. Whether ladies are to accompany these groups ?

A. Both men and women can form a batch. But only those should be selected who have some capacity to discuss with the village people about the ideology and programme of Sarvodaya.

Q. 3. Whether all the persons are to be lodged in one place or to be distributed in various houses ?

A. The persons should be distributed to several houses where they will stay as guests. It is better if only one person stays at one house. This is necessary as off-time chatting with the neighbours of the host is not less important than speeches at the gathering. When 4 or 5 persons will stay at different houses those places will become different centres where people will gather and talk with the guests.

Q. 4. Whether we should carry our meals with us or we should depend upon the villages for meals etc. ?

A. No meals should be carried. The *yatrees* (pilgrims) should depend on villagers for this. That is why I have suggested that the halting places should be prearranged. If by chance it so happens that the villagers do not give food to them, they should go without food for a day or so.

Q. 5. Whether we should carry *charkhas* with us ? If so, are we to have a conveyance with us to carry our luggage ?

A. Bamboo *charkhas* or *taklies* should be carried. In the first week of February there is not much cold and the luggage will not be much to need a conveyance. It can be carried by the party. If needed a conveyance can be taken. But this should be avoided if possible.

Q. 6. Whether it is advisable to walk in the hot sun or in the early hours of the morning ?

A. The time for walking depends on the climate of the place. Generally February is not a hot season. The time-table given in the scheme should be followed if it is not very hot, because if the batches walked in the morning the important items of the morning i.e. *procession* and *safai* will almost be left out.

Q. 7. Whether it is essential to have the last day's *mela* on the banks of a river or on the banks of some big tanks or in temples etc. ?

A. If in the locality there is no place where Bapu's ashes were immersed, then workers can arrange a Sarvodaya Sammelan at some suitable place and not a *mela*. The *melas* should be organized at the places of *Asthi Pravaha* (immersion of ashes) only.

Sevagram, 29-12-'51

'THE BROKEN HARMONY'

[The following is taken from Kathleen Raine's review of Mrs Jacquetta Hawkes' *A Land* (Cresset Press) in *The New Statesman and Nation* of July 21, 1951, p. 76. V. G. D.]

If....we follow Mrs Hawkes' imaginative evocation of the laying down of the rock formations that make up the varied islands of Britain....we shall be reminded that man's relation to the land that he lives upon is perhaps the deepest reality of his organism. We can no more be separated from the earth of whose whole we are but parts, than corn can exist apart from the field in which it grows.

Mrs Hawkes....praises most highly those periods in which man used the land with the most sensitive understanding of the qualities of rock, soil and vegetation. Having described the laying down of the rocks, she proceeds to the uses later made of these rocks, soils, flints and clays for human architecture and culture, which reached their most sensitive harmony in the 18th century, before the full onset of the Industrial Revolution. This was the time when Wren selected and seasoned with care and knowledge every stone that went to the building of St. Paul's, and when the local variations of land and sea were reflected in the lie of fields and villages, designs of implements and boats, local dishes and textiles, and above all in buildings both great and small, adapted to the local landscape and its materials. This ecology, a gradual unbroken development whose foundations were laid before man was man, was destroyed by industrialism. The bricks and mortar of the great industrial cities, and the more recent ferro-concrete, rootless and characterless as the culture they bring with them, can only produce textiles, utensils, tools, and skills unrelated to nature, locality, and humanity itself, which is part of nature. The machine interposes between man and his environment, and in a few generations has wiped out a gradual growth and adaptation that has never been broken. This, says Mrs Hawkes, is the greatest mutation in human culture that has taken place since mesolithic times and she regards this mutation with dismay, if not despair. Writing this review on the Isle of South Uist, where the old adaptation lingers in crofts whose poverty is still rich in the skills of spinning, weaving, dyeing, fishing, singing and story-telling, I cannot but share Mrs Hawkes' belief that such poverty as this, in which man's few possessions are what he needs and has made with skill and artistry, is wealth in comparison with our urban 'standard of living,' which is no more than the power to purchase the characterless trash of the machines.

It is curious that the scientific philosophy of the 19th century was one of optimism, founded on the assumption that all evolutionary changes are bound to be for the good of the species, that the fittest inevitably survive, and that a general improvement of human existence is in the very nature of things. Now it is the scientists who have been the first to see that not all mutations lead to survival. Has man committed himself to an evolutionary error from which he cannot recover? Now that astronomers threaten our planet with extinction and biologists warn us that nature spares none of its once-favoured master-races of beast or man, scientists are writing in a spirit little removed from the grimmer prophecies of the Old Testament. Only those who see the history of man as the unfolding of a divine purpose can possibly continue to hope.

MANUFACTURE OF MOTOR VEHICLES IN INDIA

The Editor,
Harijan,

I communicate to you further thoughts that arose in my mind after reading Shri V. G. D.'s article in *Harijan* of September 8, in connection with our expenditure of foreign money in import of costly cars and beauty aids, etc. I completely agree with him and wish to place before you the disastrous policy of the Central Government in the matter of motor manufacture.

In our country the people are using 3,00,000 of motor vehicles, (Cars 80,000, Lorries 80,000 and buses 40,000) apart from military vehicles for which I do not have figures. The Government of India have given manufacturing licence to 8 companies to manufacture different makes (Ford, Hindustan, Dodge, Hudson, Morris, Standard, Austin etc.) of trucks and cars. Each of these companies has been sanctioned the capital and they have been given import licence to import parts and accessories and assemble cars before they are able to manufacture fully all the parts in India.

Taking that the military are using 1,00,000 vehicles our vehicle strength is 4,00,000. Normally a vehicle has a life of 5 years, and so an yearly replacement of 80,000 vehicles is necessary. A normal productive unit according to American standards working two shifts will produce 72,000 vehicles per year, i.e. 240 vehicles per day of two shifts. If the factory is of English type, where more human labour than machinery is employed, the production will be of the order of 40,000 vehicles per year. So if we adopt American plant we need only one factory for our own needs; if English about two or three factories. In case we have to export we should have more.

Again the spare parts which are used for normal maintenance of cars, trucks etc. will be of the order of Rs 1,000/- per year per vehicle on the average. The spare parts that we import will be about Rs 40 crores on this basis. We should have only one or two makes of cars for the whole of India, in which case the spare parts required will be uniform and we can have a chain of subsidiary industries which will manufacture automobile spares locally. This was recently stressed by Mr Anantharamakrishnan, Chairman, Board of Directors, Messrs Simpson & Co.

Again in the matter of cars, in production units, the major cost is of hydraulic presses which shapes the outer body. The machines have to be changed yearly as models and shapes are changing each year to attract people to buy cars. A nation such as ours where the foreign exchange is limited should look for utility than fashion. If so the cost of production units will be greatly reduced if the hydraulic presses are minimized and kept for a number of years.

Another point to be considered is that if we leave out the de luxe cars, with chromium all over and peculiar shapes to attract people, we can have station waggons, for making which we can again have a chain of workshops all over the

country. Station waggons can be manufactured completely of wood or angles and wood and no imported item will be needed.

The suggestion is not a peculiar one. Similar programmes had been adopted by Soviet Union in the initial stages of their rise to power. They made arrangements with Messrs Ford, and Messrs General Motor Co. to manufacture vehicles in their country, with the Americans having controlling interest for a period of 15 years after which the capital was repaid.

By adopting this suggestion we will be providing work to a lot of young men and our foreign exchange will be saved a lot. Instead, a lot of machineries at huge cost are now being imported, many of which are lying idle due to want of proper technicians. In the meanwhile, the assemblers make huge profits by merely assembling foreign imported parts and selling them as Indian products.

I do request you to take interest in this subject and persuade the Government of India to adopt a practical policy which will be in the interest of the nation, rather than in the interest of a few assemblers.

N. MAHALINGAM

SHRI VINOBA'S NORTHERN TOUR
XI

Bamora

From Gwalior we reached Bamora, a small village with a cement factory, and hence with a predominance of labour population. Vinoba addressing the people who had assembled there to greet him, said, "I have come here as your *atithi* i.e. guest, and like an *atithi* * I shall not be staying more than one day. Every deity has its own way of being worshipped. Lord Vishnu is not offered *bel-patra* (leaf of the *bel*-tree) nor is Shankar presented with *tulsidal* (leaf of *tulsi*). This *atithi*, who has come to your doors, accepts only *bhoo-dan* offering. The flowers, the fruits and the milk that you will offer, may satisfy the flesh, but the deity will not be pleased by it. It will be pleased only by the offering of land. If everyone of you will come forward to give land, the village will transform itself into Gokul. We want to worship the Goddess of Love. Please devote yourselves all the day in collecting *bhoo-dan*. The day's collection is to be offered to God at the time of the evening prayer. I am glad that I have received co-operation from all i.e. Congressmen, Socialists as also Hindu Mahasabhaites. But help can be effective only when charity begins at home. Start, therefore, has got to be made from oneself."

At 10 a.m. he started for a round in the village. He went to Harijans, Thakurs, Rajputs. I must not forget to mention an amusing incident here. Two swords were hanging in a Rajput's house. Vinobaji asked, "Have you ever used them?" The man answered, "No sir, I have never, nor do I hope to. We keep it only as a mark of dignity of our class." Vinoba explained to him that it was no longer necessary to keep those swords as emblems. He had better have them melted and turned into agricultural tools. He found people using torn and dirty clothes. An enthusiastic *khadi* worker that he was, he stopped some of them and said, "Why do you not weave and make your own clothes, as we do in the Ashram? See the cloth that I wear. It is spun and woven in the Ashram. It is better for you to dress like me rather than have dirty and torn clothes."

On his return to the lodging, he found a lady awaiting his arrival. She made a donation of 250 (?) acres. Small land-gifts were received also from various people.

Papers had reported that the Communists had suspended their campaign in Hyderabad. Press correspondents came from Gwalior to know Vinobaji's reactions thereon. He said that he had already advised the Communists some three months ago to change their ways and to surrender their weapons to the Government. They could not expect to command the confidence of the people or the Government unless they surrendered their arms. If they had then acted on his advice, they would have had sufficient time at their disposal to gain the confidence of all.

Morena

Morena was our last halting place in Madhya Bharat. It was a distance of about 13 miles from Bamora. In the post-prayer speech here, Vinobaji, answering a question, said, "I have been asked, what I would do if my appeal to give land does not bear expected fruit. This is not my way of thinking. I have been doing this work because it has come to my lot. I have not said that I have undertaken this work. So I work with the faith that it will bear fruit. And in whom does my faith rest? In my God." Then he narrated the heart-rending tale of Telangana. "I was ruminating that although Telangana had not within its pulse the germs of violence, the grinding poverty and unemployment may force people to change their habits and it is on this account that I am trying my level best to bring about a peaceful and non-violent change in the social order. This I intend to do for the present through the *Bhoomi-dan-Yajna*." He further added, "Whatever time I have spent with you, I have done so with utmost thought and care and if we want to make our nation strong and powerful, we shall have to bring about social and economic unity and as such this is a common task which we all should undertake in a co-operative spirit."

The workers of Dholpur had come to greet Vinobaji on the bank of the river Chambal, which marks the boundary between Madhya Bharat and Rajasthan. The land is beautiful and green. But the workers, who claimed to serve the land and its people quarrelled among themselves. Vinobaji, therefore, had to make some plain speaking with them: "If I had but known that your differences had reached such a stage as not to co-operate even in the cause of the landless, I would not have come to your town and would have preferred to stay in a village nearby. I am a student of the *Gita*, which does not force knowledge on the unwilling."

He told them to take a broad view of life. Their country was not limited by the boundaries of Dholpur or, for that matter, of Rajasthan. They must realize that they were citizens of the world. They must learn to love all without exception. They should realize that they were different from their bodies. That was the surest road to make one's outlook broad. "This land has given birth to a universal philosophy. Narrow outlook, therefore, has no place in our country, for it may then go to pieces. Let us try to unify it, harmonize it and transform it into one whole. Let only that voice be echoed from within ourselves."

Referring to his mission, Vinoba said, "The work I am doing is the work that showers happiness. I rejoice even when I share my thoughts with you all." And exhorting them for *bhoodan*, he said, "You should care more for your own progress. The less the burden of your wealth, the more the progress."

In the workers' meeting, Vinobaji emphasized that the Congress could not be purified unless there was a programme, which demanded sacrifice. He advised them to sink their differences.

The workers consequently sat together and after a while informed Vinobaji that they had adjusted their differences. 500 acres of land were, as a result, received by Vinobaji in his *Bhoo-dan-Yajna*. The following are the figures for the period covering this letter:

Camp	Acres	Camp	Acres
Lashkar	90	Morena	110
Bamora	90	Dholpur	500
		Total	790

D. M.

* Literally, one without a date i.e. a person whose visit is without previous notice, and whose stay is generally not more than a day.

AGRICULTURAL MACHINES AND FERTILIZERS

(*By M. Smilanski*)

In our small country the exaggerated mechanization of agriculture has caused two drawbacks: (a) Specially applying to our small country: The machine requires petrol and spare parts for which foreign currency is needed; and (b) General: Besides soil, for agricultural production water and manure are required. The machine supplies the water but not the manure. The tractor, the combine and the truck don't produce organic manure which is the by-product of the horse and the ox. While the machine replaced them in order to save hand work, the manure has disappeared and without manure the soil cannot give us her strength.

As the man so also the soil adheres to the principle of give and take. The machine invented a remedy, namely, the chemical manure, but the chemical manure can be used only in addition to organic manure and not as a substitute thereto. Organic manure only creates humus and only from it comes the gifts of the earth. Salt, for instance, gives a very nice taste to bread, but should man try to live on salt alone he would fall sick. The same happens to the soil if it is nourished by chemical manure only. According to scientists, all plants receiving their nourishment from chemical manures suffer from different sicknesses which affect also the living creatures eating them, both animals and men.

Not long ago it was said that India wanted Israeli agricultural experts and some of our experts were all ready to go and advise that nation which is so far from us in space but spiritually so near. Those however who have read the general agricultural literature know that in India there exists, since several decades, a very famous Agricultural Research Institute, whose findings were appreciated not only in Britain and her Colonies but even in Germany, which, as is well known, is very high up in agriculture; and the main service of that Institute is soil manuring for returning the strength to Mother Earth. By their experiments, researches and tests in several lines of agriculture and in different countries this Institute came to the conclusion that manuring with chemical manure only is not a blessing but a curse. This Institute found that tea, coffee, maize, fruits, vegetables, rice and vine grown on chemical manure only reduces the yield, also the quality and the immunity against sickness lessens. One of the popular research workers of this Institute put it so nicely when he said: "Artificial manure creates artificial nourishment, artificial animals and finally artificial men and women."

From the time when the world got so rich in machines it became so poor in organic manure and that Agricultural Institute found after much experimenting that we can create organic manure from waste of plants, from the refuse in houses, courtyards and streets mixed with a little cow or poultry dung and cow urine and with methodic addition of water. In short, they proposed the use of the now very popular compost according to the "Indore process", and this compost enriched again with humus many soils impoverished by too much exploitation or by too much use of chemical manure.

What do we learn from this? We must at least breed more cows and poultry — since the horses have been swallowed by the machines — and also that we may have to prepare organic manure, compost by the "Indore process".

(Extracts from an article in an Israel Hebrew Agricultural Magazine sent by Mr. Michael Fuss).

Shri B. Narasimha Rao

The election of Shri B. N. Rao as a judge of the International Court of the United Nations is a great compliment not merely to him personally but also to all-India.

I have always believed that there must be in every country some persons at least, who could be implicitly relied upon for impartial justice, even if it involved their own personal or national interests.

I believe that there must be such noble men and women even now in every country. It would be a great day when mutually adversary nations, instead of seeking crude and doubtful justice through war, or even through an arbitration by stranger nations would set the tradition of referring their disputes to a judge and jury composed of their own nationals and taking without demur their unanimous decisions as conclusive and final.

To take for instance, the Kashmir problem. The United Nations Council has been unsuccessfully trying to bring about a peaceful settlement for four years now. How grand and noble it would be if India, Pakistan and Kashmir could decide upon a tribunal of one, two, three or five upright men of their own States, and agree to abide by their unanimous award! If Shri B. N. Rao can be trusted to be a judge of the International Court of the United Nations, can he not be one in a tribunal for settling disputes between India and Pakistan, along with a noble son each of Pakistan and Kashmir? I am sure that Pakistan and Kashmir cannot be devoid of such noble creations of God.

Bombay, 11-1-'52 K. G. M.

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